

**Amendments to the Specification:**

Please replace the abstract on page 13 with the following paragraph:

-- Compositions and methods are provided in which surface-modified manganese sulfide is produced from powdered manganese sulfide that is coated with a coating agent in an amount of 0.01-10 wt% for a sufficient time to ensure a homogenous mixture. Particularly preferred coating agents include wax, esters of organic or inorganic acids, oils, low melting polymers or aliphatic alcohols. --